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Worlds of poverty and prosperity

separated by a road

By ZHAO HONGYI

Beijing Today Staff

The villages of Qujiamo in Laishui County, Hebei Province and Zhengjiamo in Beijing are separated by a single road.

Villagers in Qujiamo have to dig wells to find drinking water while villagers in Zhengjiamo have access to running tap water. In Qujiamo, residents receive a subsidy of 350 yuan for every 600 square meters of forest they protect while villagers in Zhengjiamo recieve 3,500.

Even the monthly salary of the village's party secretary is staggeringly different, with the secretary of Qujiamo earning 400 yuan and Zhengjiamo earning 1,200 yuan.

Pensions are even more unequal.

But many villagers see a hope for better salaries and pensions in the government's new policy to promote the development of Tianjin and Hebei Province.

## Two different pictures

The two villages are located about two hours from West Fourth Ring Road in Beijing.

In Zhengjiamo, the roads are clean and paved with fresh asphalt. The village's main street features hundreds of white marble balustrades valued at 600 yuan each.

But the scene is less organized across the street. Qujiamo's homes are built in all different styles and colors. They are united only by a uniform yellow fence that was placed to hold up a single banner: "Enjoy the Results of Poverty Alleviation!"

For the villagers, the contrast is hard to accept.

The two enjoyed a similar level of prosperity throughout the 1980s. The first differences appeared in the 1990s, and since 2008 the inequality has exploded.

"We don't have any minerals or enterprises. We can only rely on the preferential treatment policies of the New







Two villages in contrast

Village Building policy of the Beijing municipal government," an official in Zhengjiamo said.

"Forest planting efforts and the Beijing-Shijiazhuang Expressway occupied most of our land. Most of the villagers lost their farms and become forest safeguards, but they can only earn 500 yuan per month."

Qujiamo has been less lucky. At one time the village was famous for planting hawthorns, but hawthorn prices have collapsed. Prior to 2012 the village had only dirt roads and mud brick houses.





**BQB Photos** 

According to the last census, 170 of the 186 families live below the national poverty line.

The 73-year-old Wang Shaojiang and his wife Zhang Shuzhi had no money to repair their home since it was built in the 1970s. The couple's only appliance is a silent television Wang Shaojiang found in the garbage. The interior is still decorated with pictures of Chairman Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping promoting the "China Dream."

Wang and Zhang lost their land eight years ago when the Qujiamo occupied it

as part of a tree planting program. They received a one-time payment of 960 yuan for their land.

Today they scrape by by raising a dozen sheep in their yard. Each year, they earn less than 2,000 yuan by selling the sheep for slaughter.

## 'Perfect' future

The families' differences show the great gap between Beijing and Hebei Province.

Scenes of hardship motivated the governor of Hebei Province to personally come and investigate the situation. This year, Qujiamo Village installed street lights and paved a few of its dirt roads. Much of the rotting trash has also been picked up.

In 2012, Qujiamo spent 200,000 yuan to sink a 200-meter well. The county government offered to reimburse 70 percent of the cost, bringing running water to the village for the first time. Each family spent 450 yuan to bring pipes to their homes.

"We frequently go to Zhengjiamo Village to buy medicine," said Li Siying, a villager in Qujiamo. "But I have never heard of any girl from there who was willing to marry one of the boys from our village."

"The day I hear of a girl in Zhengjiamo willing to marry a boy from Qujiamo, then I will believe in the government's plan to bring equal prosperity to Hebei," Li said.

# Prison leader charged with accepting bribes from inmates

Bv ZHAO HONGYI

Beijing Today Staff

Cui Zhengang, Police Superintendent Class III and head of Pukou Prison, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, was arrested on August 22 and charged with accepting millions of yuan in bribes from the families of his inmates

Chen Jie, a senior official in Jiangsu Prison Affairs, said Cui was confirmed to have accepted 4 million yuan from the family of Li Yong, a man in prison for crimes related to underground crime.

"Li may have promised to help them 'solve some problems,' but in the end he did nothing," Chen said. "It might be one of Li Yong's relatives who snitched on Cui for taking their money."

On July 14, Xu Zhixing, party secretary of the prison's discipline inspection committee, said Cui also received lavish banquets and accommodations from Li's wife, a woman surnamed Gao. In exchange, he allowed Li to have access to cigarettes and wine and to use a mobile phone in prison.

Gao, who was working and living in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, also used her position and money to help Cui arrange more than 20 tours of the city for delegations of officials under his administration.

Prior to his arrest, Li was the leader of an underground criminal organization in northern Jiangsu Province. He was the most wanted man in the area before his arrest. He was caught, tried and sentenced to nine years in prison in 2009.

Li was first assigned to be a machine worker in the prison. He then changed

his job to a printer, possibly with help from Cui.

Cui also had a younger brother who operated a restaurant beside Pukou Prison. Years ago, his younger brother began issuing illegal loans to his customers and fell into heavy debt. Cui started collecting money from his prisoners to help pay off his brother's debts, the court said.

In addition to accepting bribes from his prisoners, Cui also borrowed 3 million yuan from his friends and relatives. **FEATURE** 

## Top qigong huckster back behind bars

By ZHAO HONGYI

Beijing Today Staff

After less than three years of freedom, cult leader Wu Zeheng, also known as Wu Mouheng, is back behind

Wu was arrested on June 30 for pressuring his female followers to engage him in sex acts. He reportedly told the women his "holy sperm" would allow them to achieve the highest levels of Buddhist enlightenment.

More than a dozen of the women gave birth to Wu's children.

Wu's 40,000 worldwide followers say he is the latest "martyr" in the government's crackdown on cults. But the decade-long paper trail assembled by police paints a very contrary image of the wannabe sage.



Wu Zeheng's official life story reads like a mash-up of swordsman fiction and popular religion.

According to his official biography, the spiritual leader was born in Jieyang, Huilai County, Guangdong Province in 1967. At the age of seven, Wu was selected to begin studying Buddhism under Dezen and Dezhi, a pair of monks from Caomen, Guizhou Province. Four years later he began his training in Shaolin kung fu.

In 1990, Wu began an eight-year hermitage in the Wuvi Mountains where he met and trained under a pair of qigong masters. Their magical training enabled Wu to see the future, fly, change his size and project his spirit across the astral plane.

With his newfound superpowers, Wu assumed the name Zen Master Shi Xingwu and began sharing his own brand of Buddhism, reciting parables and providing faith healing services to those suffering from cancer, infantile paralysis and irritable bowel syndrome.

As a living god, Wu claims to be a direct descendant of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. In addition, he is the founder and honorary chairman of Life Science Society of China and board chairman of Beijing Huazang Consultation Center, his cult's corporate entity.

He has also claims to be the 88th Patriarch of Buddhism, the 61st Patriarch of the Chan Sect, the 51st Patriarch of the Caodong Sect and the 32nd Patriarch of the Sangha Sect.

But facts paint a contrary image of the spiritual leader.

Born to a family of common farmers in Jieyang, Guangdong Province in 1967, Wu never pursued any studies beyond the mandatory nine years of public education. Neighbors recall Wu as a troublemaker who often fooled around with the girls in his class, the Jieyang Police said.

Wu left Jieyang at the age of 16 and drew little notice until November 1991,





Police raid Wu Zeheng's home in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province.

Wu Zeheng calls himself a master of **Budhism and Oigong healing**.

when he was arrested in Huilai by the local police and charged with adultery, then a criminal offense in China.

After his release, Wu went to Beijing and became involved in the qigong movement. He amassed followers and capital through a series of performances that left behind broken families and ill individuals, many of whom discontinued their medical treatments after putting their faith in Wu's impossible cures.

Wu penned a passive aggressive letter to President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji in 1999. His indirect threats of revolution led the government to jump from merely monitoring his organization to seizing Wu for illegal fundraising in 2000.

The crime carried an 11-year sentence.

## The rise of gigong

Most qigong cults have their roots in

Deng Xiaoping's then recent reforms had opened the door for increased communication with Hong Kong and Taiwan, and among the most popular imports were the 1976 film Shaolin Temple and the wuxia

fiction of Louis Cha, better known by his pen name Jin Yong.

Initially, the popular media inspired a rediscovery of China's traditional religions. But that blush with the spiritual opened the door for legions of con men eager to prey on a newly literate but still naive Chinese population.

Among the most prominent of these "qigong masters" were Zhang Hongbao and Yan Xin.

Zhang, the founder of the banned Zhong Gong cult, had more than 3 million followers who were convinced of his powers to cure blindness and cancer. Yan's 2 million followers were certain he could put out forest fires with a blast from his palms and change the trajectory of missiles with his mind.

Amazingly, Wu, Zhang and Yan all followed the same path to success.

In the late 1980s, qigong masters often spoke and performed at universities to win over a handful of intellectuals. With scientists at key institutions willing to vouch for their impossible powers, most had an easy time winning over the masses.

Tickets to most qigong speaking engagements cost 100 vuan, a considerable amount at the time. Healing services cost even more

## Nowhere to hide

In 1999 and 2000, the Chinese government went on the offensive against qigong cults. While many considered the phenomenon to be over, the cults were merely driven underground.

The last three years have seen a reemergence of former qigong masters often to face criminal prosecution.

Wang Lin, once a qigong consultant to the stars, was found to be living as a millionaire in a five-story luxury villa in Luxi County, Jiangxi Province. He was arrested in Hong Kong last year for practicing medicine without a license, gun ownership and bribery.

Li Yi, the favorite qigong master of Alibaba's founder Ma Yun and pop singer Faye Wong, was busted in 2010 for raping several of his female disciples.

Wu's case has been even more dramatic. While still imprisoned in 2010, Wu opened a store in Zhuhai to sell expensive Buddhist crafts and "enlightenment tools." The store was his first foothold in the community.

After his release, Wu moved into a 190-square-meter penthouse on Zhuhai's Beach Avenue. The home, which cost 1.3 million yuan, was paid for entirely by one of his followers in Liaoning Province. Other students sold their homes and factories to support Wu's habits of entertainment and art collection.

Hefty membership fees and exotic commercial schemes kept the money roll-

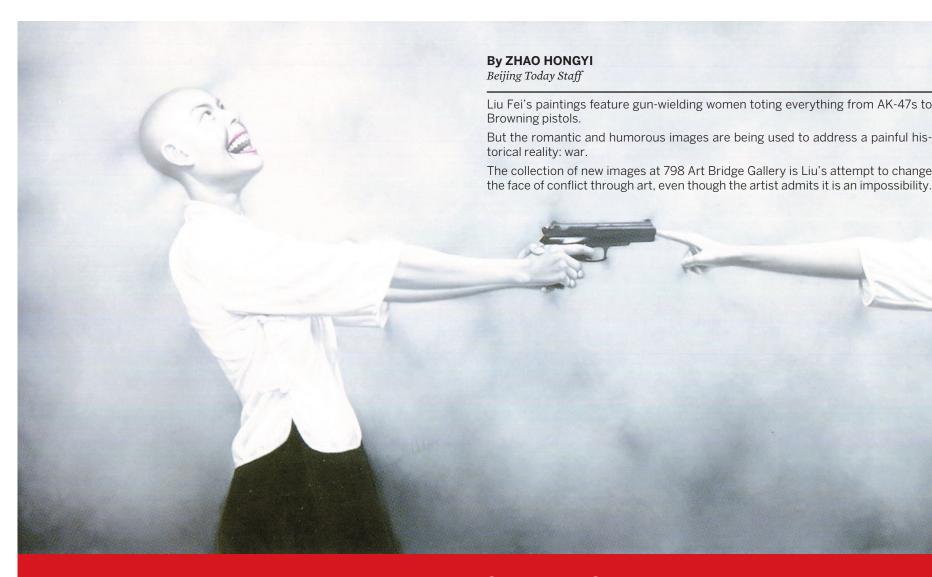
In 2012, Wu declared that Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province would have an earthquake and that the only way residents could protect themselves would be to buy his magical earthquake lights for 1,212 yuan. When the quake never occurred, Wu announced he had used his powers to relocate the Earth's kinetic energy to a fault in another country.

Seeking to capitalize on the education boom of 2012 and 2013, Wu expanded his operations by opening a training school last year. Enrollment in a four-day "Zen Camping" class cost 8,000 yuan, and students seeking further one-on-one instruction could chat with Wu online for 5,000 yuan, according to Wu's financial records.

But it was Wu's bizarre doctrine that landed him, and many of his followers,

Wu taught that sexual intercourse with one who is spiritually enlightened can expedite Buddhist studies. It was the teaching that led him and his male acolytes to coerce and force numerous female followers into sex

Police arrested Wu and 80 of his followers on July 30. Twenty-one remain in police custody where they face charges of fraud, destroying public order and rape.



# The Feminine For



Women and Gun 02



Women and Gun 06

## Solo exhibition

Among Liu Fei dancing with a rif by The Red Detac the 1960s and 197 Kuomingtan troop The face of wa

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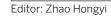
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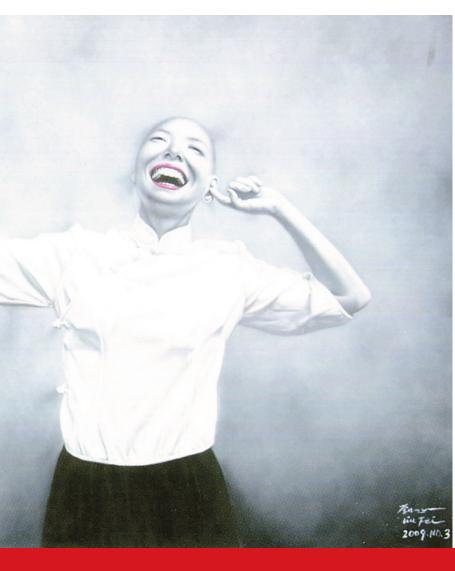
approach to confli equals. It may a destructive impac

## Liu's road

Liu was born painting at the A graduated in 1989 in Beijing.

His solo and jo jing, Shanghai, H Spain, Switzerlan nying themed deb





## Q&A with Liu Fei

Q: What was your main inspiration in choosing such a harsh topic?

A: As with most artists, daily experiences inspire my creations. I hope wars will be handled by women in the future: the results would be much better.

Q: Do you believe women could make war better?

A: I believe so. Of course, the actual result would depend on what those women do. I understand the driving force behind wars is fundamental interest. But there's no reason we can't have a discussion and come to a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Q: It seems you are very set on the idea of peace. What do you expect will come out of the current conflict between China and Japan, Philippines and Vietnam?

A: I have no background to comment on political affairs. However, I believe that if we are going to insist the islands belong to China then we should take some steps to control, operate and develop them.

Q: What's your next topic?

Women and Gun 04

A: I have many topics in mind. I follow TV news and pay attention to every topic. But finding an interesting topic and figuring out how to paint it are two completely different things. For now it's best to keep it a secret.

# m of War

's art is one image featuring a woman le. It's a scene that's clearly influenced hment of Women, a popular ballet of Os that recalled a fierce battle against as on the island of Hainan.

r has changed in the last 60 years, Liu its it to change even more in the future. The sanalyze the modern reality, which is kpiles of weapons and shows of force. Iraq and Afghanistan, war was about nology alongside images of strapping ewing conflicts between China and its oming contests to see who can show used weapons.

of history, it appears a more feminine ct rather than a bloody battle between lso be an attempt to weaken war's

in Nanjing in 1965. He studied oil cademy of Fine Arts of Nanjing and Since 1998, he has lived and worked

int exhibitions have been held in Beilong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, d and Thailand, often with accompaates. Behind his creations is the ardent belief that art must be connected to society if it is to last.

"We don't lack gentle descriptions of combat, positive doctrine or an emphasis on peaceful resolution. What's usually missing is a unique, independent and critical view of war," Liu says. Military analysis, comparisons of strength and promotion of conflict are ridiculous and worth laughing at, he says.

"Much like music, art can only express itself. It's silly to think that it can have any further metaphysical meaning," says Diao Wei, the curator.

## Skeptical viewers

Most of the viewers of the exhibition expressed a strong interest in the Liu's work.

"The exhibition made us think about war – about what the real face of war might look like in the future," says Yang Shanju, a professor from the Academy of Fine Arts

"The idea that wars could be the domain of women is interesting, but not very realistic," says Wu Jiayan, a second-year student of oil painting at the academy."But I believe war will less cruel and bloody. War needs love

But others doubted that change. With many wars still based on resources and fundamental interests, their nature is unlikely to evolve.

In Liu's art, the gulf between interesting discussion and reality appears vast.



798 Art Bridge Gallery

Where: D09-1, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

**When:** Through September 4

**Tel:** 64331798 **Cost:** Free

Women and Gun 05



## Ice bucket challenge Education or entertainment?

By DIAO DIAO

Beijing Today Staff

n the last week, the ice bucket challenge that started on YouTube and Facebook has jumped from the US to almost every other country.

First popularized by American celebrities, the challenge was created to draw attention to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

Lei Jun, chairman of the board of Xiaomi, was the first Chinese man to take the challenge on August 18. Since his attempt, hundreds of Chinese celebrities have uploaded videos of themselves dumping buckets of cold water on their heads. In fact, the keyword "ice bucket challenge" has appeared in Chinese social media more than 2.4 billion times.

Initially, the challenge required the participant to choose between dumping a bucket of ice water on their head or donating \$100 to the study of ALS. Whoever took the challenge could upload a video to challenge three other people.

But mentions of ALS are oddly absent in the videos seen online of Chinese CEOs and superstars attempting the challenge.

ALS is an incurable and typically fatal disease. After diagnosis, patients gradually lose control of their motor abilities and assume a frozen position even while their mind remains alert. Most die within 3-5 years of their diagnosis.

As more celebrities assume challenge, critics are questioning whether its purpose has shifted from awareness to entertainment. In many videos, the Chinese celebrities are seen laughing and screaming without mentioning the cause or the disease at all. The videos are often tagged as "funny" or "entertaining."

Many Chinese articles about the challenge have focused more on comparisons between the buckets celebrities used to carry the water or analyzing their personal networks based on who they choose to challenge.

It has translated into numerous tasteless activities offline.

A business activity in Nanjing on August 21 used the ice bucket challenge to attract customers rather than promote ALS research. In Jinan, Shandong Province, a female mud wrestling event promoted itself with a "mud bucket" challenge in the park.

Hu Guangwei, deputy director of the Institute of Sociology at the Sichuan Academy of Social Science, said such entertainment-oriented uses only decrease the value of authentic charity work. "These innovative approaches to charity should not be misused for commercial purposes."

But while many bemoan the lost focus, to some extent the phenomenon is not all bad.

President of the Nanjing Red Cross Liu Xia said that no matter how it's used by the public, the ice bucket challenge will educate more people about the disease. Even if they are not donating money, the effort to spread knowledge about ALS deserves thanks.

Wang Yiou, director of the China-Dolls Rare Disease Care Center, is especially grateful.

In the past few years, the only approach to charity work has been to find rich men, persuade them to donate some money and hold a charity banquet



Bikini ice bucket challenges have little to do with ALS.

or marathon to raise donations, she said. But the celebrity effect of the ice bucket challenge has given charity work a new way to call for attention.

"Those activities never got much attention. The ice bucket challenge raised about 1.4 million yuan in less than a month. That's more than we've seen in the entire last year," Wang said.

The ice bucket challenge has already inspired new approaches to charity in other countries. India's "rice bucket challenge" aims to donate food to the poor. Ayman al Aloul, a Palestinian journalist, started a debris bucket challenge because his country has limited water.

Zhou Hongyi, chairman of Qiho360, took the challenge. He said charity is not only about money, but about spreading information. Instead of being sentimental or compassionate, charity can be exciting activities that encourage people to get involved.









## **Rubber Ducks**

Before the gaudy installation that toured the world last year, yellow rubber ducks were the world's most popular bath toy of the 1980s. The toys were designed to float in a child's bath basin and let out a squeak when squeezed.

**Plastic Bricks** 

Childhood photos from the 1980s often feature chil-

plastic bricks were construction toys

their tank.

intended to inspire children and

dren surrounded by a sea of plastic bricks. Similar to the now dominant LEGOs, domestically produced

Ask anyone from the 1980s about origami and the first thing that will come to mind is a jumping frog. Weekly art classes in elementary school often covered the basics of papercraft by teaching how to make a jumping frog. By pressing down on the back fold with your fingernail and dragging back, it's possible to make the frog hop a short distance. Students often competed to see whose frog could jump the highest



## **Bamboo Copters**

This ancient toy enjoyed renewed popularity in the 1980s thanks to Doraemon's magical flying stick. Flying copters were first made of bamboo in ancient China, where they were first sighted by European missionaries. The simple design inspired the invention of the first German helicopter in 1930. The copter is usually made from two bamboo or plastic sticks. Rub your hands in opposite direction to make it take off. Just be careful to make sure you rub with the rotor blades - the little copters can wreck your thumbs if you launch them backwards!



## **Ring Water Toss**

Before the advent of electrical an afternoon or more to complete.



Marbles were one of the most popular toys of the 1980s in China. Although the first balls were actually made of marble, they were soon mass produced using glass or hard acrylic that showcased flowers, moons and colorful ribbons encased in each ball. Firing a marble with your thumb and making it stop at the right place required a lot of skill, but children of the era were experts.

## Slingshot

Before boys' hands were occupied by Xbox controllers and PSPs they were occupied by slingshots. The simplest and cheapest slingshots were made from forked branches of hardwood trees. A rubber band stretched across the fork with a small leather cup in the middle made the perfect device for launching rocks or other small objects at innocent targets.



games these were one of the most popular toys. The typical machine has either one or two buttons used to pump a jet of air into the waterfilled tank. Tanks would usually contain pegs or stands that would be used to catch the rings. The goal was to manipulate the jets of water to hook all the rings on the pegs. The challenging game could take



Photos provided by CFP, Douban, meilishuo.com, sina.com, pconline.com.cn, huitu.com

**FOOD**August 29, 2014

## **Mooncakes for Mid-Autumn**

## By DIAO DIAO

Beijing Today Staff

Mid-Autumn Festival is coming soon and the mooncakes have landed at Chinese supermarkets.

This year's festival will fall on September 8, the 16th day of the eighth lunar month. In addition to mooncakes, the Mid-Autumn Festival is also a time for drinking osmanthus wine.

There have been an explosion of new options for mooncake shoppers during the last decade. Many bakeries and sweets shops have started offering exotic wrapping like snowy mochi and new stuffings like French wine and ice cream. Many are popular as a lighter alternative to traditional, oily mooncakes.

But celebrators seeking a bite of tradition have only four real choices: Guangzhou, Beijing, Suzhou or Chaozhou style.

Guangzhou mooncakes have a thin cover with generous amount of soft and sweet stuffing. Chaozhou mooncakes are similar, but have a more oily and sugary taste. Suzhou mooncakes are famous for their crispy cover and salty flavor.

Beijing's mooncakes are the most common. The balance of sweet fillings and attractive wrappers make them one of the most classic styles.

If you're not sure what kind of mooncakes to buy for your friends or family, this week *Beijing Today* has put together a guide to traditional mooncakes.



Suzou mooncakes

## Yolk Mooncakes

These mooncakes are typically prepared in the Guangzhou style and have a delicate appearance. The round cake has wavy edges with a brown-yellow hue. A salty duck egg yolk is contained in the middle of the filling. Typical flavors include lotus seed, jujube or coconut paste. The dry and salty yolk balances out the wet, soft and sweet paste.

## **Wuren Mooncakes**

Although many young people hate this mixture of nuts, Wuren mooncakes are some of the oldest and most traditional. Wuren mooncakes are stuffed with sugar and a blend of smashed almonds, walnuts, peanuts, sesame seeds and melon seeds. The nuts are neither too hard nor too soft, and their fragrant smell is a favorite part of the Mid-Autumn Festival for many Chinese elders.



Zilaihong mooncakes



Mooncakes with modern stuffing



Wuren mooncake



Photos provided by CFP and nipic.com

## Zilaihong or Zilaibai Mooncakes

Forgotten by Chinese youth and undiscovered by foreigners, Zilaihong and Zilaibai mooncakes are the oldest of all Beijing styles. Zilaihong is made of sugar, rock sugar and nuts with colorful slices of orange peel and preserved fruits. Osmanthus is also added to the filling to give it a fragrant smell. The cover is round and free of edges with a red dot drawn on the surface. These mooncakes are somewhat crunchy and smaller than others. Zilaibai is almost the same except it uses lard and the color of the orange peel and cover is white. They are popular treats throughout the year.



## Make your own osmanthus wine

Osmanthus wine is the essential food for Mid Autumn Festival. But rather than buy it, it's best to make your own. All it takes is some baijiu and flowers.

### Ingredients

- 50g osmanthus flowers
- 1000g Beijing Erguotou
- medlar fruits
- rock sugar and sugar

### Steps:

- Clean the osmanthus flowers with a wet cloth. Don't use water. Remove the stems.
- Place the flowers in a big jar and cover them with sugar. Let them stand for three hours.
- 3. Add the medlar fruits, rock sugar and marinated osmanthus to the



Erguotou. Seal the jar and shake it to mix the ingredients.

4. Let it macerate for as long as possible. It's best if you let it go for at least three months.

Yolk mooncake